DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 156 SO 027 803

AUTHOR Gross, Zehavit
TITLE The A Priori Ideological Orientation of Schools in Kibbutzim in Israel.
PUB DATE 97
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association Convention (Chicago, IL, March 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Philosophy; Educational Research; Ethics; Foreign Countries; Grade 12; High Schools; Higher Education; Jews; *Judaism; Philosophy
IDENTIFIERS *Israel; *Kibbutzim

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the a-priori ideological orientation of pupils in two different types of schools in the kibbutzim in Israel, the movement schools (Hatakam or Hashomer Hatzair) and the mixed schools. The paper attempts to show how different educational circumstances and environments develop a distinct a-priori ideological orientation in students from approximately the same kind of population. The study involved 249 pupils in 12th grade from 9 kibbutz schools who wrote essays on the topic "Positive and Negative Aspects of the School's Approach to Judaism" and made statements about their feelings toward various types of Jews. Content analysis was performed on the compositions and statements. The information gathered was organized into six categories: ideological, social, behavioral, emotional, intellectual, and general. Findings showed that while students at movement schools rated high in ideological stances, students of "mixed" schools held more generalized attitudes in respect to both components of the study. This was particularly evident in the analysis of the attitudes toward the various types of Jews. (EH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 410 156

The A Priori Ideological Orientation of Schools in Kibbutzim in Israel.

by

Zehavit Gross

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY:
Gross Zehavit

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Published: 97

SO 027 803

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Gross, Zehavit

School of Education

Bar Ilan University

Israel

Zehavit Gross

P.O.Box 135

Elkana, D.N. Ephraim

Israel

The A Priori Ideological Orientation of Schools in Kibbutzim in Israel

Purpose

This paper examines the a priori ideological orientation of pupils in two different types of schools in the kibbutzim in Israel [Movement schools (Hatakam or Hashomer Hatzair) as opposed to a mixed school].

Theoretical Perspective

This paper attempts to show how different educational circumstances and environments develop a distinct a priori ideological orientation with approximately the same kind of population.

The widely held assumption that any broad ideologically based educational institution deeply colors the political, religious or social perspective of its' students can be verified by these research findings.

To examine the a priori ideological orientation of pupils in this research means to attempt to determine to what extent pupils are using ideological terms and ways of thinking in order to analyze different aspects of their personal and social lives. Namely, when they are confronted with any given human situation, to what extent their reaction

and general attitude is general and diffusive, and to what extent they are using expressions which prove that their analysis and basic conception is based upon ideologically oriented terminology.

Actually, there are two main ways to express ideological education: explicit and implicit. The cross section of these two ideological educational possibilities is demonstrated hereinafter:

-	+	explicit / implicit
A Priori Ideological Orientation	Ideal	+ -
Indifferent Position	Real	-

The first possibility represents the typical reality of ideology which can arise explicitly. In other words, the specific ideology which is learnt and fostered at school is articulated by the pupil when he is asked directly about it. It presents the reality in which there is an input-output relationship between what was taught and what was actually acquired by the pupil. According to this position it is difficult to know whether there was an internalization of ideology and whether it has practical consequences. However, it is obvious that whenever a student is asked about the ideological creed, extrinsically or verbally, he can react towards it using the unique ways of thinking and language which characterize that specific ideology.

The second educational position is the position which I will call "the ideal position" which combines both the explicit and implicit educational expression. According to this position the student not only knows how to express and articulate the ideology but he

also internalizes its' specific belief. This represents an idealistic position which is the embodiment of every educational dream.

The third position is the indifferent position, i.e. the student has undergone ideological education and socialization but it has not had any impact on either the internal or external dimension.

The fourth position is the domain of the a priori ideological orientation. Whereas the explicit educational reality can be examined only indirectly, the implicit reality is a proof of internalization of the ideological convictions which were studied throughout the educational process. In other words, while indirectly examining the subjects opinion about a given subject which doesn't necessarily belong to the given ideology, one can find a high level of ideological prominence. If the answers are loaded with ideological dimensions we can prove that the subject has an a priori ideological orientation which precedes any other type of consideration. Accordingly, if we ask direct questions which are connected with the specific ideology which is taught in the educational situation and the answers given by the students are in accordance with the declared ideology, the student possesses a declared, explicit, ideological position. However, one would be able to infer that it is possible that the student has internalized categorical, ideological ways of thinking, if, when the student is asked questions that aren't directly connected with an ideology, even though the domain of the question is different from the context of the ideological subject matter, and his answers are, nevertheless, of an ideological nature (according to criteria decided and agreed upon in advance and which are a reliable reflection of the ideological content). Thus the student may be defined as one who has an a priori ideological orientation. That means that the student's decisions within his general existential world are taken in accordance with the ideological system in which he has been brought up and which influence his

internalization of the general ideological system. Thus we have proof that the student has developed an a priori ideological codex for himself which is embedded naturally within his personality.

Whereas the explicit sphere is usually artificial and is created deliberately, the implicit sphere is spontaneous and authentic.

Whereas it is relatively easier to check and examine the explicit dimension identification of the implicit domain is highly complicated.

Finally, a priori ideological orientation is an indirect, natural, spontaneous and authentic expression of attitudes towards the general life questions of an individual, which are based upon ways of thinking and articulation, which are characterized by ideology and are the reflection of the centrality and dominance of the ideological aspect of the human conscience. This position should not be seen as an indoctrination or ideological determination but rather as an expression of verbal preference which is the outcome of a personal decision which is made out of autonomic and democratic choice. This kind of saying belongs to the ideological sphere which reflects healthy internalization or ideological thought as a natural and integral part of the verbal thoughts and behavioral repertoire of a man.

In this paper I attempt to present the crucial difference between two populations which were examined in research on Jewish education in the kibbutz schools of Hashomer Hatzair and Hatakam (Hatnua Hakibbutzit Hameuchedet) and their different ideological convictions.

Some background should be supplied before presenting the above-mentioned argument. The kibbutz movement has an ideological orientation and a commitment to attempting the creation of a utopian society within itself and in relation to the larger

environment. Ideology is based on a doctrine of social movement with a political and cultural plan and the devices for putting the plan into operation (Sheffer, 1977).

Components of the kibbutz ideology are: Social Justice, Direct Democracy, Socialistic Zionism, Equality, etc. Thus, the kibbutz has created unique frameworks and types of education which were designed as an integral part of this educational plan (Kerem, 1985).

The kibbutz structure is reflected in the structure of the kibbutz school and in its unique educational ethics and, as Shmuel Golan one of the kibbutz founders, said, "solving questions concerning kibbutz education simultaneously leads to solving questions of kibbutz life" (Golan, 1961).

The kibbutz movement has two main trends: Hatakam and Hakibbutz Ha'artzi. Each trend has created a separate educational system which reflects the fundamental differences between the trends (Rosner, 1978). (Hereinafter referred to as movement schools).

Recently the differences have become blurred for many reasons, but the two trends continue to maintain two different political, social and educational systems. However, because of pragmatic and particularly economic considerations, the kibbutz movement has been forced to establish mixed schools comprising both trends. This research is pioneering in its study of pupils from this type of school.

Population: The study involved 249 pupils in 12th grade (Academic stream only) from 9 kibbutz schools - 4 schools of the Kibbutz Ha'artzi, 4 Takam schools, and one with pupils from both trends, to be called "mixed." This population sample was recommended by the Kibbutz Research Institute at Oranim College.

Instruments:

A. Student compositions on the topic "Positive and Negative Aspects of the Schools Approach to Judaism"

B. Analysis of statements on various types of Jews. The students were asked to express their rapport with a particular Jewish type, on a scale of 1 to 5, and the degree of acceptance / rejection of the person on a scale of 1 to 7 called "remote island."

Method and Analysis: The compositions and statements were subjected to content analysis, mainly according to Berelson (1952) and Eisner (1981, 1990).

The information received from the compositions and the statements was categorized into six main categories or dimensions: The ideological, the social, the behavioral, the emotional, the intellectual and the one termed general.

All the categories were strictly examined by external referees and were considered strictly valid.

The ideological dimension consisted of statements which included the words: outlook, view, life quest, life conception, etc.

In comparison the behavioral dimension consited of behavioral statements like: "He behaves correctly," "I wish everyone would act like her," "She/he has the right to do this," etc.

The general dimension has vague statements such as: OK, "a good guy," "I don't know what to say about him," etc.

The research findings show that while in movement schools the ideological stance was higher, in the "mixed" school there was a generalized attitude to the topic in respect of both components of study. In the mixed school the generalized attitude to Judaism reached a higher level than the other schools and this was particularly striking in the analysis of the attitude toward the various types of Jews.

These findings can be explained in various ways. In my opinion, one of the most important factors is that movement schools have a declared ideological orientation which is imparted by teachers as part of the socialization process.

This attitude to ideology gives the kibbutz pupils a prior ideological base which is especially evident when they have to deal with essential questions. However, because the mixed school is the product of pragmatic constraints, there is a deliberate disregard of ideological disputes. Thus the educational message is vague and obscure.

Following the distribution of questionnaires at each school, I interviewed both teachers and headmasters asking them what, in their opinion, would be their students' answers to my questions. I thought that the teachers answers would help me understand the pupil's world and their answers more clearly. There was a distinct difference between the conversations I had with the teachers from the movement schools and the teachers from the mixed school. While the teachers in the movement schools were able to predict answers to questions confined to their specific ideology, the predominance of the mixed school teachers tended to be erroneous and obscure in their speculation. Moreover, each teacher at the mixed school accompanied his answer with the same

apology: "Let's leave this issue so that we won't have to get into an unfinished and redundant ideological argument", or "we don't speak about this subject in the teacher's room because it is controversial". This type of conversation, at the micro level was replicated at the macro level where most of the answers I analyzed were, as mentioned before, "general" (Gross, 1991).

If a teacher himself does not want to face these issues in a staff room, how much more so in a classroom situation. Consequently, the ideological orientation of his lessons will be general, vague and dull. A teacher from the movement school, however, is self confident and, although he is sometimes perplexed, he knows the general direction and he speaks it out loudly and clearly.

There is a dispute among different researchers regarding the relative significance of the school as a socializing agent. Most research shows that among socializing agents, home is of primary importance, followed by the school and then the peer group. Accordingly, the ideological orientation of a school and the special atmosphere it creates, has an influence on the subjects. The subjects actually come from a more or less similar home background, from an ideological point of view but nevertheless behave differently according to the different ideological orientation of the schools. Thus, subjects which study at movement schools share a priori ideological orientation whereas subjects from mixed schools share a general and diffuse ideological orientation. In order to understand this finding in depth, I tried to examine the a priori ideological phenomenon in a different academic context, i.e. outside of the kibbutz. In a replication of this research carried out two years later, eighty 12th grade students from four different high schools in an Israeli city, were tested. Of the four schools, one

is private and is considered to be an ideological school. The three others are public schools and are considered to be excellent. In all the schools the best pupils were chosen for the purposes of the research. These students were given the "Types of Jews" questionnaire in which the students were asked to express their rapport with a particular Jewish type, on a scale of 1 to 5, and the degree of acceptance / rejection of the person an a scale of 1 to 7 called, for the purposes of the research, "remote island". The procedure for analysis was the same as described above. In the ideological school the level of the ideological stance was found to be higher than in the other three schools.

Dimensions	Ideological Oriented School	A Public School	B Public School	C Public School
Ideological	10	5	5	4
Behavioral	4	5	5	3
Social	4	2	1	6
Emotional	1	3	4	3
General	1	5	5	4

When the teachers in the public schools were asked about the research findings, their answers were essentially apologetic. They claimed that school these days serves as an instrument for the acquisition of knowledge, thus school cannot strive towards achieving ideological or moral ends. "We don't have time for ideology in this endless rat race for grades and achievement." Moreover, some teachers claimed that in the Israeli school system there is a tradition that teachers present a neutral response to

ideological questions. Hence teachers are not committed to the development of any ideological orientation.

The teachers in the ideological school were satisfied with these findings and said that it was a direct outcome of their educational investment.

There are two kinds of unity: mechanical and organic. Mechanical joining is external like the joining of the four walls of a house. Their unity is strictly physical and there is no force which inheres in them molding them into a unified form. Organic unity, however, is internal. Like walls, limbs too are joined, but through a life force, which penetrates them uniting them into one unit - the human body. This is the life force, or as some would call it, a spiritual force or a soul, but all agree it penetrates into all parts of the body and unites them into one organic unit. The connection among a group of people that choose to live in the kibbutz is organic connection. What unites them is the ideology - this is the soul of the group. This ideology is dynamic and changes according to the vicissitudes of life. Schools are a reflection of society and its values. This is intensified in the kibbutz schools because of the close connection between the development of kibbutz society and the education given at the kibbutz school. Thus one of the prices that the kibbutz has to pay for having a mixed rather than an ideological school is that no specific ideology is formed and this effects the kibbutz network as a whole as was shown in the research carried out in the mixed school.

The general attitude as reflected in both parts of the research portrays a spiritual laxity and a low ideological perspective. In many cases the ideological component seems almost non- existent. Perhaps the mixed school finds itself joined only at a physical or mechanical level. If these two trends, Hatakam and Hakibbutz Ha'artzi, could be

united in thought in order to create a united ideological and political outlook, then perhaps the schools would enable them to form a better social and educational system. Because of the ideological confusion of the teachers in the mixed school and the schools formal policy, the ideological aspect is neglected in the learning situation. Actually, with the foundation of the mixed schools, school as an institution has preceded the social and political reality, which is an unnatural process and contradicts the logical and natural way of the creation of schools. Although the ideology of the trends of kibbutzim are not parallel, and although each trend has separate political and social institutions the schools of the different trends are mixed. This causes an unnatural situation. The natural process would be to combine the two trends of kibbutz on an ideological, institutional and political level and then to create a mixed school. The reality, as was mentioned before, is contrary to this: children with different ideologies are thrown into one school causing a lack of unity and unclear political and social ideals. The phenomenon of mixed schools cannot be prevented for pragmatic reasons but if teachers had been aware of the hazards and "price" of these circumstances in advance, perhaps certain pedagogical problems could have been avoided.

Finally, the findings of the a priori ideological orientation phenomena have implications of major significance for pupils in any ideologically based educational setting or context either religious or secular. Ideological atmosphere and direct ideological education create the conditions for an a priori ideologically oriented state of mind. The neutral ideological position of the school produces a spiritual vacuum. Every vacuum tends naturally to be filled but not necessarily with productive or positive substances. Thus, the school must plan suitable curricula in advance. The 21st century will be

characterized by the continuation of the post modern era in which there will be a total breakdown in the moral and ideological components of the human race. Perhaps the solution found in the mixed schools in microcosm can act as a guide to finding a solution, or at least a direction, to a world wide problem facing us all today.